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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 002231

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: EU CONSIDERING HARDER LINE ON UZBEKISTAN

REF: A. A) TASHKENT 1623

[B. B\) STATE 106098](#)

[C. C\) BRUSSELS 2008](#)

Classified By: USEU POLOFF TODD HUIZINGA, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

1. (C) SUMMARY: EU Foreign Ministers will consider taking punitive measures against Uzbekistan unless the GOU agrees by the end of June to an independent, international inquiry into the Andijon events. If the GOU does not agree to an international inquiry, Germany plans to push for use of the OSCE "Moscow Mechanism," by which 10 or more OSCE member states can call for an OSCE rapporteur on Andijon without Uzbekistan's agreement. The possibility of an EU visa ban, after the end-of-June deadline, on high-level GOU officials has also been raised. Although the outcome of internal deliberations is uncertain, those calling for a harder line appear to be gaining ground within the EU. Meanwhile, France has not yet officially refused the GOU's invitation to monitor a GOU-led investigation (REFS A-B). The EU is still trying to get its Special Rep for Human Rights a visa to visit Uzbekistan, despite the GOU's recent refusal to grant one. END SUMMARY.

EU DEBATING TOUGH POLICY DECLARATION

2. (C) On June 8 Poloff met with Leo Schulte-Nordholt, EU Council Principal Officer for OSCE Affairs, and Ausra Aleliunaite, EU Council Principal Officer for Central Asia. They said EU Foreign Ministers would discuss, at the June 13 GAERC meeting, a draft declaration on Uzbekistan. The declaration will repeat EU FMs' May 23 call for the GOU to agree to an independent, international inquiry into the Andijon events (REF C). Two questions are being debated internally: (1) whether to set a deadline (probably the end of June) for the GOU to agree to an international investigation; and (2) whether to outline specific punitive measures the EU would take if the Uzbeks do not agree by the deadline. Schulte-Nordholt said the main action under consideration was to downgrade the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), and cut off development assistance other than aid that goes directly to independent civil society groups.

FRENCH UNLIKELY TO ACCEPT UZBEK INVITATION

3. (C) Our interlocutors reported that France had raised the question within the EU of whether it should accept the Uzbek invitation to monitor a GOU investigation of the Andijon events. They told us that, although France had fended off all Uzbek approaches on this question so far, it had not yet come to a final decision. In the light of the EU call for an independent international inquiry, though, they predicted the EU would counsel France against accepting the Uzbek invitation. Language declining the invitation to the French might be included in the June 13 FMs' declaration, they said.

EU HUMAN RIGHTS REP TO VISIT UZBEKISTAN?

4. (C) Schulte-Nordholt told us that EU HighRep Javier Solana was trying to persuade the Uzbeks to grant his Special Rep for Human Rights a visa to visit Uzbekistan. The Special Rep, Michael Matthiessen, had been denied a visa last week. Schulte-Nordholt added that Matthiessen was trying to get the EU FMs' declaration to include language calling on the GOU to grant the visa. Schulte-Nordholt predicted, though, that EU FM's would balk at making demands at that level of specificity.

IF UZBEKS REFUSE, MOSCOW MECHANISM?

5. (C) Schulte-Nordholt said that Germany was likely to invoke the OSCE Moscow Mechanism (by which ten or more OSCE member states would appoint a rapporteur on Uzbekistan without GOU concurrence) if the Uzbeks refused to allow an

international investigation by the notional EU-imposed deadline of end of June. He said the Germans were attempting to get agreement on this from all of the 24 other EU member states, but might well press on even if EU consensus proved unachievable. Schulte-Nordholt added that the Germans could easily get the agreement of at least 9 other EU member states, thus reaching the number required by OSCE rules.

AN EU VISA BAN ON GOU OFFICIALS?

16. (C) Schulte-Nordholt told us the possibility of an EU visa ban on high-level GOU officials had also been raised. If the EU did set an end-of-June deadline and the Uzbeks did not meet the deadline, he said, deliberations on such a ban would begin in earnest.

17. (C) COMMENT: Our interlocutors stressed that the questions of whether to impose a deadline and name specific punitive measures were still undecided. Nonetheless, those within the EU calling for a harder line to force the GOU's hand seem to be gaining momentum. END COMMENT.

SCHNABEL

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